

Talise language

Talise is a Southeast Solomonic language native to Guadalcanal with a speaker population of roughly 13,000. While some consider Talise to be its own language, others use it as a blanket term to group the closely related dialects of Poleo, Koo, Malagheti, Moli, and Tolo. It is a branch of the Proto-Guadalcanal family, which forms part of the Southeast Solomons language group.

Talise	
	Tolo
Native to	Solomon Islands
Region	Guadalcanal
Native speakers	13,000 (1999) ^[1]
Language family	Austronesian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malayo-Polynesian ▪ Oceanic ▪ Southeast Solomonic ▪ Gela-Guadalcanal ▪ Guadalcanal ▪ Talise
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	tlr
Glottolog	tali1259 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tali1259) ^[2]

Contents

Dialects
Phonology
Consonants
Vowels
Diphthongs
Prenasalisation
Stress
Grammar
Adjectives
Possessive Adjectives
Adverbs
Prepositions
Verbs
Passive Voice
Future Tense
Plural Nouns
Negative Questions
References

Dialects

Even though Talise is a language on its own, it is also widely considered as a way to group other similar dialects such as Tolo, Moli, and Koo. The sound correspondences among these are very close. Many words like *aso* 'sun' and *vula* 'moon' are identical across all of the dialects. However, many other languages and dialects in Guadalcanal also share the same phonemes and words.^[3]

Phonology

Consonants

The Tolo language has thirteen consonants. Most letters are pronounced as they are in English, with a few notable exceptions. The letter *v* may be pronounced as the voiced fricative [v] (as in English *vote*), but it is also pronounced as the glide [w] (as in English *win*) in certain cases. The digraph *ts* is nearly always pronounced like the *ch* in *church*, except when used in the word *katsa* 'bark skirt', where it is pronounced as [ts] (as in English *cats*).^[3]

Consonant Phonemes

	Labial	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p, b	t, d	k, g	
Nasal	m	n, l		
Tap/Flap		r		
Fricative	v	s		h

Vowels

Tolo has five short vowels, namely *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*. The letter *e* can either be pronounced as in "ever" or as in "shake", and the letter *i* can either be pronounced as in "tree" or as in "sit".^[3]

Diphthongs

There are eight diphthongs in the Tolo language. These are presented in the table below.^[3]

Ending with /e/	Ending with /i/	Ending with /u/	Ending with /o/
ae	ai	ou	ao
oe	oi	au	
	ei		

Prenasalisation

The nasal sounds [m], [n] and [ng] are no separate phonemes, but always occur before the phonemes /b/, /d/ and /g/ respectively. Therefore, they are to be understood as part of those latter sounds. However, the extent to which someone hears this prenasalisation depends entirely on the speaker, as some stress it more if /b/, /d/ or /g/ come at the middle of a word instead of at the beginning.^[3]

Stress

Stress in Tolo is almost always put on the second to last syllable, regardless of how many syllables are present in a word. Some of the rare exceptions are the pronouns *hamitou* and *hamutou*, in which the stress is placed on the first syllable.^[3]

Grammar

Adjectives

Adjectives in Tolo almost always immediately follow the noun that they modify. The only exception to this rule is that numerals precede the noun. An example of this pattern is *baka lava* 'big child', where the adjective *lava* 'big' modifies the noun *baka* 'child'.^[3]

Possessive Adjectives

The prefix/suffix 'na' is used to denote possession, depending on alienability, that is, if the modified noun is understood as an important part of the possessor or not. However, there is no specific rule that can be used to determine whether or not a noun is alienable or inalienable, so it is left up to each individual speaker. As an example, "the way(road) of Jesus" can be said as either "salana lesu" or "nasala lesu", with the affix 'na' acting as either the prefix or suffix.^[3]

Adverbs

Adverbs tend to come after the verb that they are modifying, but they come *before* the verb when they describe a direction. For example, in *Hia e ba bongi* 'He went yesterday', the time adverb *bongi* 'yesterday' modifies the verb *ba* 'went'. However, there are exceptions to both these rules. For example, to say come 'come quickly', one can say *mai kesa*, using the adverb *kesa* after the verb *mai*, but if one uses the alternative adverb *savua* to mean 'quickly', only the order *savua mai* is acceptable.^[3]

Prepositions

The most common prepositions are *i* and *na*, which can be interchanged in some cases. Some other common prepositions are *hinia*, *sania*, *vania*, *tavallia*, *sana*, *tania*, and *ovea*. These prepositions can also change their endings as the object they are describing changes.^[3]

Verbs

Tolo verbs are divided into transitive and intransitive classes. Transitive verbs are followed by an object and change their endings depending on the object. Intransitive verbs are not followed by any objects and do not change their endings.^[3]

Passive Voice

There is no passive voice in Tolo. English passive voice can be implied by using *kesana* 'someone' or *hira* 'they' along with an active verb. For example, *Hira belia na kaui Bobi* can be translated to 'Bob's dog was stolen', but more literally means 'They stole Bob's dog.'^[3]

Future Tense

Future tense is denoted by a pre-verbal particle. Future tense always has to be indicated overtly, regardless of how far into the future the sentence talks about, whether it be a few minutes or a few months.^[3]

Plural Nouns

Tolo marks plurality on the article, but not on the noun itself (as in English with the suffix *-s*). For example, the plural of *a daki* 'the woman' is *hira daki* 'the women'.^[3]

Negative Questions

Negative questions are commonly answered according to the sense of the question being asked, not necessarily according to the answer. This is unlike English, where a question like 'Don't you want it?' can be answered either with 'Yes, I want it' or 'No, I don't want it'. In this case, an answer is given based on the idea the question is posing, not necessarily on the way it is worded. However, the same question in Tolo can be answered with *Eo, nau taiha ngaloa* which translates to 'Yes, I don't want it' or *Taiha, nau ngaloa*, which is 'No, I want it'.^[3]

References

1. [Talise](https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/tlr) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/tlr>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "[Talise](http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tali1259)" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tali1259>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Crowley, Susan (1986). [Tolo Dictionary](https://archive.org/details/tolodictionary0000crow) (<https://archive.org/details/tolodictionary0000crow>). Pscific Linguistics Series C - No. 91. Canberra: Dept. of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. [doi:10.15144/PL-C91](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-C91) (<https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-C91>). [hdl:1885/145398](https://hdl.handle.net/1885/145398) (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/145398>). ISBN 0858833468.

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